Court, Nassik, against the orders of the Labour Court, after which the trainees sought a transfer of the case from Nasik to Industrial Court, Thane. They also gave an undertaking that they will not Sisist on implementation of the Labour Court's order till disposal of the case. Accordingly, the case has been shifted to Industrial Court, Thane, where it is pending.

Vacant post of Chairman of Cauvery Water Tribunal

550. SHRI N. THALAVAI SUN-DARAM: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the post of Chairman of Cauvery Water Tribunal is vacant;

(b) if so, since when it is vacant;

(c) the reasons for not filling up the post; and

(d) by when the post is likely to be filled?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It is vacant since 1.7.96.

, (c) and (d) The Chief Justice of India has been requested to nominate a suitable Judge to be the Chairman of the Tribunal. Filling up of the post depends on receiving the nomination from the Chief Justice of India.

Assault on Journalists by BSP Leaders

551. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS De pleased to state:

(a) whether some journalists were recently physically assaulted and abused by die BSP leaders in Delhi and later a rally of the journalists protesting against the behaviour of BSP leaders was teargassed by the police without any provocation;

(b) if so, whether any inquiry into the incident has been conducted by Government;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the action taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR): (a) to (d) The Delhi Police have registered two cases, one on the basis of a complaint lodged by a media person and the other by In-Charge Security of Ms. Mayawati, in connection with the incident reported to have taken place at the residence of Shri Kanshi Ram, Member of Parliament, on the 25th October, 1996. Shri Kanshi Ram, Member of Parliament, on the 25th October, 1996. A group of journalists protesting against this incident took out a procession on the following day and marched to the North Block after defying the prohibitory orders in force in the area. When the warnings of the police personnel filed to stop them from marchine further, the police had to fire some tear gas shells to disperse the gethering.

The Press Council of India had constituted a special fact-finding Inquiry Committee to look into the incident of the 25th October, 1996, but the Council subsequently decided not to proceed with the inquiry in view of the objections raised by the media persons.

Provision of telephone services at cheaper Rates in rural areas of Maharashtra

552. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of villages, district-wise, in the State of Maharashtra which are being covered by the scheme of "providing telephone services at cheaper rates in rural areas" during the year 1995-96 and the details thereof;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) by when it is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERM A): (a) The information is given in the enclosed statement *(See below)*

(b) and (c) does not arise in view of reply to part (a).

Statement

Rrual subscribers have been given the following concessions w.e.f. 1.1.96. The salient features are:

1. Free calls have been increased to 250. from 150 per billing cycle.
2. Registration fee for new connections has been reduced to Rs. 1000/-from existing Rs. 2000/for rural subscribers working from exchange systems of below 10,000/-lines.
3. Telephone rental has been reduced to Rs. 100/-bimonthly from existing Rs. 150/-for rural subscribers of exchange systems of 100 lines to below 1000 lines.
4. The installation charges for telephone connections in telephone exchanges of less than 500 lines shall be maintained at Rs. 300/-upto 31.3.98.
5. Call charges for 200 calls above 250 free calls have been reduced by 25%.
6. Commission payable to franchisees of local and STD PCOs in Panchay-ats and PCOs provided under Pan-chayat Sanchar Sewa Yojna has been increased from present 20% to 50% on gross turnover.
7. STD/ISD PCO franchisees in rural areas other than those covered above shall be paid commission @5% of gross turnover.

Number of villages covered in Maharashtra State, district wise are as under:—

Name of Distt.	No. of Villages
Akola	1546
Amravati	1999
Bhandara	1624
Boldhana	1272
Chandrapur	1777
Gadchiroli	1601
Wardha	1015
Yeotymal	1751
Jalgaon	1418
Raigad	1827
Rathnagiri	1388
Sindhu Durg	650
Sangli	708
Satara	1573
Solapur	1104
Nasik	1742
Dhule	1616
Ahmednagar	1501
Aurangabad	1239
Jalna	915
Beed	1215
Lathur	831
Osmanabad	696
Nanded	1425
Parbhani	1420
Kalyan	1146
Kolhapur	1200
Nagpur	1504
Pune	1720
Goa	407

Amount of Licence fee received from LOI Holders for basic telephone services.

553A SHRI SATISH AGARWAL Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of licence fee actually received from the Letters of Intent (LOI) holders for the basic telephone services;

(b) the amount of licence fee expected from the LOI hodlers for the basic telephones services upto by March, 1997; and